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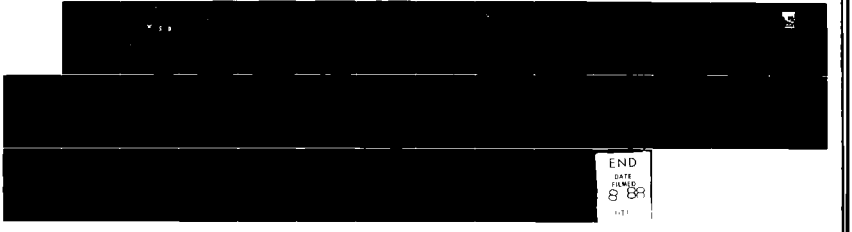

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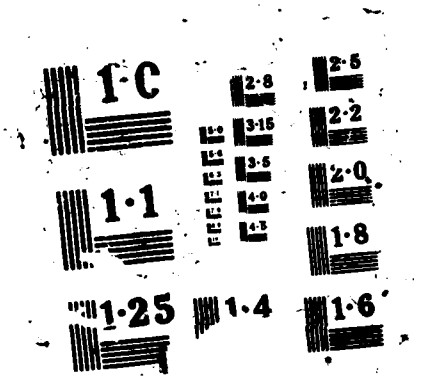
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IN THE 21ST CENTURY

MAJOR TONY SIMPSON REPORT # 88-2415

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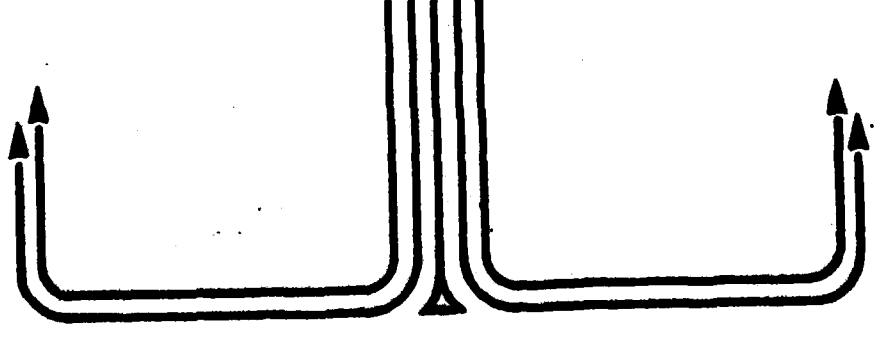

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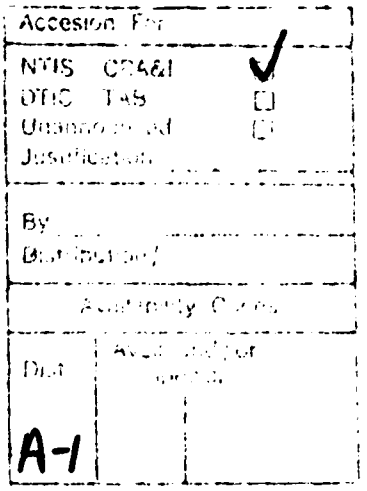

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This report develops options for maintaining a physical USAF presence in Latin America after 1999 when the Panama Canal Treaty expires and the U.S. loses access to its bases in Panama. The report first explains the strategic importance of Latin America to the United States, then establishes U.S. military objectives in the region. It then proceeds to determine whether or not a physical USAF presence is in fact needed in the area to support those objectives, concluding one is necessary. Finally, it develops a model for a presence consisting of reactivating major and minor facilities, establishing new ones, increasing Air Attache positions, and establishing an Air Force Civic Action Program.

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PREFACE

The year 1999 will be a watershed year for the United States in Latin America. That year the access granted the U.S. military to bases in Panama will end by treaty. Unless other arrangements are made, the U.S. will be left without adequate means to support its military objectives in the region.

Locating reliable, alternate basing sites will not be easy. Latin American countries are developing increasing economic and political independence from the United States, and more and more take pride in exerting it. Thus, if the U.S. is to maintain a presence, it must begin now to explore options that will both satisfy military objectives and be sensitive to the complex sovereignty issues involved in the region.

The days of benign neglect of Latin America are gone. We can no longer afford the economy of force attitude which assumed a secure, stable backyard, allowing the U.S. to concentrate on force projection elsewhere. If we are to remain capable of supporting our global commitments, our focus must turn south and insure the security and stability of that region.

This work is a step in that direction. It examines the strategic importance of the region to the U.S. and the military objectives arising from that importance. It establishes why a physical USAF presence is necessary to support those objectives. It then develops a model for maintaining a presence in Latin America that will effectively support U.S. military objectives, lessen criticism of the U.S., be sensitive to sovereignty issues, and aid regional development.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Simpson has lived and travelled in Latin America as a military member, independent civilian, and military dependent. He is a graduate of Squadron Officer School in residence and is currently earning a Master of Political Science degree from Auburn University at Montgomery. He entered active duty in 1978 and has served as a MAC combat control officer. Major Simpson was the officer in charge of a large combat control team and has been the commander of a combat control detachment. In 1986 the Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command, designated him to receive the "Outstanding Combat Control Officer of the Year" award. Upon graduation from the Air Command and Staff College, Major Simpson will be assigned to Headquarters, US Forces Caribbean as an International Political-Military Affairs Officer.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part of our College mission is distribution of the students' problem solving products to DOD sponsors and other interested agencies to enhance insight into contemporary, defense related issues. While the College has accepted this product as meeting academic requirements for graduation, the views and opinions expressed or implied are solely those of the author and should not be construed as carrying official sanction.

"insights into tomorrow"

REPORT NUMBER 88-2415

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR TONY SIMPSON, USAF

TITLE USAF PRESENCE IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

I. Purpose: To determine whether or not a USAF presence is needed in Latin America and, if so, to develop options for maintaining one after 1999.

II. Problem: Unless other arrangements are made, the expiration of the Panama Canal Treaty in 1999 will end U.S. military access to its bases in Panama. If a USAF presence is needed in the region after those bases are lost, consideration must be given to how it will be accomplished in the face of rising nationalism.

III. Data: Latin America is strategically important to the U.S. as a trading partner and source of raw materials. The sea lines of communication (SLOC) coursing the region are vital to America's trade, security, and its ability to meet military commitments abroad. The region is also important to the U.S. in the global geopolitical balance of power. The era of virtual U.S. regional hegemony has passed as the countries there develop and exert their political and economic independence. This importance and regional challenges have spawned military objectives for the U.S.

U.S. military objectives aim at denying access to the region by hostile forces capable of threatening U.S. security, while maintaining U.S. access to resources, trade and SLOCs. These goals have been met by programs to promote regional stability and by maintaining a military presence.

The current U.S. military presence in the region is considered by some, to include high-level DOD officials, as inadequate to meet U.S. contingency requirements. Loss of Panamanian bases will exacerbate this problem. Naval forces may not be able to respond quickly enough to crises or may be unavailable, particularly in a wider war. Their predisposition to an offensive maritime strategy also mitigates against a defensive SLOC protection role in the Caribbean Basin. The Air Force, on the other hand, can respond quickly to project force anywhere in the hemisphere. It also considers maritime operations a major Air Force mission (AFM 1-1, para 3-3). To be most effectively employed, however, air forces must have secure staging bases as close as possible to the target area.

IV. Conclusions: Latin America will become more important to the U.S. The days of an economy of force strategy, which allowed us to maintain regional stability and security with minimal effort while focusing on force projection elsewhere, are gone. A USAF presence is needed in the region to support U.S. military objectives. The Air Force can assume a greater role in SLOC defense. Basing sites for air forces and other avenues of maintaining a physical USAF presence should be pursued.

V. Recommendations: Replace Panamanian bases with others in the region. Disperse the presence through a series of forward operating bases and locations, using the 1941 Base Lease Agreement and relations with other allies as a basis. Increase the USAF maritime role in the Caribbean Basin using B-52 and other aircraft configured for antiship and antisubmarine operations. Increase the Air Attache presence. Develop a regional Air Force Civic Action Program to support the other recommendations and promote regional stability by aiding national infrastructure development.

Introduction

In 1999 the Panama Canal Treaty will expire. Unless other arrangements are made its demise will end United States access to military bases in Panama. Assuming the loss of access and the continued strategic importance of Latin America to the United States, how the U.S. military will maintain a presence in the region to support U.S. objectives is of concern. This paper will address that issue from the Air Force perspective. Specifically, how can the U.S. Air Force maintain a dynamic, physical presence in Latin America if access to bases in Panama is lost?

The question of a USAF presence in the region will be addressed in four steps. First, the strategic importance of Latin America to the United States will be established. This will be treated briefly since it is assumed the importance of the region is obvious. Second, given the significance of Latin America, U.S. military objectives for the region will be determined. This will also be brief and accomplished partially by examining the missions of the U.S. forces currently assigned responsibility for the region. Third, it will be determined whether or not a physical USAF presence in the region is required to support those objectives. Finally, assuming a physical presence is required, a model containing various options for accomplishing it will be examined and recommendations for adoption made.

Chapter One

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF LATIN AMERICA TO THE UNITED STATES

In 1969 Chile's Foreign Minister aggressively confronted President Nixon on several North-South issues in the presence of Henry Kissinger. Mr. Kissinger rebuffed him saying,

> You come here speaking of Latin America, but this is not important. Nothing important can come from the South . . . The axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance (23:263).

While this may only have been an overstatement spawned by an emotional confrontation, it may also represent the ignorance and "benign neglect" common among American policy makers with respect to Latin America. Ignorance and neglect of this region today are reckless, inexcusable and intolerable. The political, economic and military importance of the region to the United States is significant.

The political importance of the region, to a great extent, stems from its proximity to the United States and has to do with world perceptions of the efficacy of U.S. power. Washington DC is closer to most Latin American countries than it is to the west coast of the continental United States.

> A friendly southern flank . . . is considered to be fundamental to the nation's ability to project its power and influence elsewhere. Latin America is also perceived to be important in terms of the perception of the effectiveness of U.S. power . . . much of the world regards the responses of the United States to the challenges at its doorstep as important measures of maturity, confidence, and determination in dealing with complex international issues . . . failure would be taken as a sign of declining U.S. power (32:3)

> . . . the overriding fact is that our credibility worldwide is inevitably engaged in an area so close to the United States. The triumph of hostile forces in our strategic rear would be read as a sign of U.S. impotence--the inability to define our objectives, manage our policy, and defend our interests successfully (16:46).

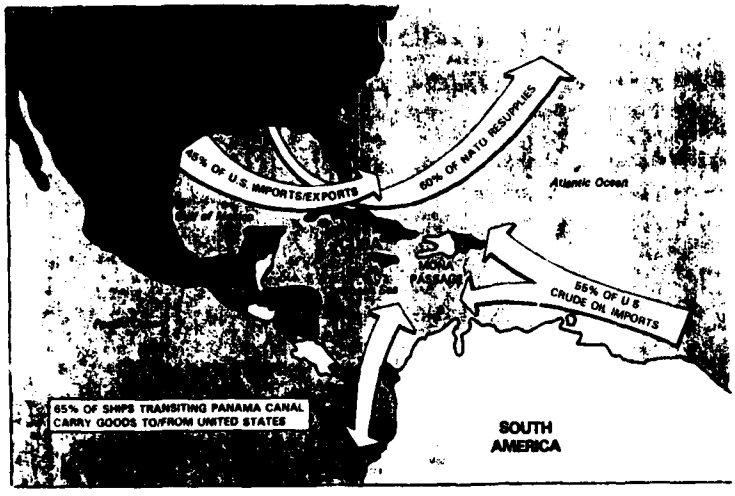
Additional political significance of the region is derived from its impact on the U.S.-Soviet balance of power. "It is important in the global balance of

political power that the United States be able to count on good relations with the countries of the Western Hemisphere" (21:51). Margaret Hayes of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations staff explains the importance of this relationship. While not perfect allies, the Latin American countries have more consistently supported the U.S. than any other third world segment. This has allowed the U.S. to project itself in a positive way among third world countries (21:47). Put another way, no one knows an inidividual better than the ones closest to him, his family. If the members of the family of Western Hemisphere states do not support the U.S., then the U.S. will lack credibility and influence with the rest of the world, thereby weakening its power and position relative to the U.S.-Soviet global balance. It is, therefore, important that the U.S. encourage "friendly states that support the United States and do not threaten to throw their political weight behind the principal antagonist of the United States in the global balance" (21:47).

The economic importance of Latin America to the United States is two-fold. The first relates to the direct investment and trade with the region. The second aspect is indirect, relating to the unrestricted access and flow of commerce through the area.

Latin America is an important trading partner, investment avenue and source of raw materials for the United States. "The U.S. sells $33-billion in goods to Central and South America every year, the equivalent of what it exports to Europe and four times what it exports to the rest of the Third World" (34:30). Our third largest trading partner in the world is Mexico (31:31). The hunger for investment capital has created a debt burden that could have catastrophic effects on U.S. banks and a significant impact on our economy. "By 1986, Latin America's external debt totaled $382 billion, more than half the total indebtedness of all developing countries" (52:1). "The Caribbean Basin countries own nearly half the total debt" (31:31). At one point, the nine largest U.S. banks had 44 percent of their capital committed to Mexico alone (35:46). Latin America is a significant source of raw materials for the U.S. "Mexico is our greatest foreign supplier of oil" (31:31) with the region as a whole accounting for forty percent of our imported petroleum (34:30). If oil from outside the region that is refined in Caribbean-based refineries is added, the region impacts fifty-five percent of U.S. crude oil imports (50:5). In Latin America are principal U.S. suppliers of silver, zinc, gypsum, antimony, mercury, bismuth, selenium, barium, rhenium and lead (31:31), "including 99% of all the strontium bought by the U.S." (34:30). "Nearly 60 percent of imports of bauxite and alumina come from Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname" (31:31).

The second aspect of Latin America's economic importance to the U.S. focuses on the sea lanes coursing the Caribbean Basin. The significance of these sea lines of communication is best demonstrated by the illustration below taken from the U.S. Departments of State and Defense publication, The Challenge to Democracy in Central America.



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The importance of these sea lanes to the commerce of the region and U.S. trade is readily apparent. If a power hostile to the United States gained access to the countries straddling those lanes, it would be in a position to interdict U.S. shipping with devastating impact on our economy and ability to meet military commitments abroad.

The military importance of the region stems from two major concerns. The first is the ability of a hostile power so close to our border being able to pose a direct military threat to the U.S. homeland. From the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis it seems evident, and generally accepted, that the U.S. will not tolerate an outside power placing bases in the hemisphere with offensive weapons possessing the ability to strike directly at U.S. soil. The second concern is with the ability of a hostile force operating in the region to interdict military supplies and forces destined elsewhere. The chart above indicates sixty percent of NATO resupplies will flow from U.S. Gulf ports. Some sources estimate this to be as high as seventy percent (16:45). In World War II fifty percent of European bound supplies left those same ports. In one six-month period the Nazis sunk 260 ships in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, using an average of three submarines, operating without air cover and 4,000 miles from their support bases (16:45). Cuba and the Soviets, not having those handicaps, would be able to exact a greater toll. To neutralize a belligerent Cuba with its 200 plus combat aircraft, surface ships and submarines, or a power operating with Cuban support, would require a tremendous commitment of military force and time. The time and forces required may make defeat elsewhere a certainty (20:84) (59:38).

Related to the interdiction concern is the defense of the Panama Canal. The economic importance of the canal has diminished to the point it could be argued its defense is no longer vital (17:23-24). Usage has waned, certain merchant and naval vessels are too large for it, and other methods of transshipment are available, such as the Mexican Servicio Multimodal Transistmico across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (17:28). It does, however,

retain military importance. The U.S. Atlantic Command's area of responsibility includes "the Pacific Ocean west of Central and South America extending to 90 degrees west longitude" (47:1). In the event a contingency required the rapid deployment of naval vessels from the Atlantic to that area, access to and safe passage through the canal would be essential. Aside from any debate about the current or future economic and military value of the canal the U.S. role in defending it is set by treaty. The Permanent Neutrality Treaty between the U.S. and Panama states,

> Panama and the United States have the responsibility to assure that the Panama Canal will remain open and secure to ships of all nations . . . each of the two countries shall . . . defend the canal against any threat to the regime of neutrality (51:3).

Thus, defense of the canal is a responsibility, not a right, an obligation, not an option.

The strategic importance of Latin America to the United States politically, economically and militarily is evident. The degree of importance can be emphasized even more, but this is only an attempt to highlight certain significant factors. The importance of the region gives rise to military objectives designed to protect and promote U.S. interests.

Chapter Two

U.S. MILITARY OBJECTIVES FOR LATIN AMERICA

For this work, U.S. military objectives in Latin America are determined by examining the missions of the military commands responsible for the region. The U.S. military commands responsible for Latin America are the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) headquartered at Quarry Heights, Panama, and the U.S. Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) based at Norfolk, VA. LANTCOM has a subordinate unified command in Key West, FL, called U.S. Forces Caribbean (USFORCARIB), specifically tasked to oversee land and sea operations in the Caribbean island nations. SOUTHCOM is concerned with the Central and South American mainland with a goal of defending U.S. interests "to the water's edge." LANTCOM then assumes responsibility for operations at sea around Latin America in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as noted earlier.

The overall mission of the commands is to provide a stable southern flank for the United States. A primary mission of SOUTHCOM is defense of the Panama Canal (115:39). It also promotes stability through military-to-military relations involving security assistance, training and combined exercises. LANTCOM seeks to deter military attack against the United States and encourage stability by supporting allies. It maintains U.S. access to regional resources, markets and critical areas (47:1). USFORCARIB supports contingency plans, conducts operations and coordinates joint activities. It promotes regional stability through military-to-military dialogue and security assistance programs (42:1). Additionally, it "maintains a military presence in the Caribbean to deter potential aggressors, to demonstrate our regional interest and to take advantage of the training environment" (33:1).

Thus, the objectives of the U.S. military commands seem to be to deter aggression against the United States, defend the Panama Canal, maintain U.S. access to regional resources, markets and lines of communication, and promote regional stability through military-to-military dialogue, security assistance and training, and maintaining a presence in the area. The desire to keep a military presence in Latin America leads us to consider the role of the Air Force. The next chapter will examine whether or not the Air Force can support the overall military objectives without a physical presence in the region.

Chapter Three

THE NEED FOR A USAF PRESENCE

Given the importance of the region to the United States and the continuing defense interests, it must be considered whether the U.S. Air Force can support U.S. military objectives in Latin America without a physical presence there. This issue will be explored by presenting specific arguments for and against a presence.

Arguments against a presence consider the ability of the USAF to support operations from the continental United States (Conus) and the assumption or provision of access to facilities when needed. If access to Panamanian bases is denied it could be argued the Air Force can support any contingency from bases in the Conus. The region is close enough and aircraft ranges are adequate to allow the Air Force to project power from the U.S. mainland.

While it is true strategic airlift aircraft can respond quickly and have the range to insert troops anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, supporting aircraft would have severe limitations. Close air support (CAS) aircraft would lack the ability to respond to immediate requests if operating over long distances, assuming they had the range. Providing combat air patrol (CAP) for CAS and aerial resupply aircraft would be complicated by extreme distances. Though the most likely threats encountered would be low-intensity, the increasing availability of technologically sophisticated aircraft and weapons in the region would make it imprudent to rule out the need for CAS and CAP, as the British learned in the Malvinas/Falklands War. While naval aviation could perform this role, the crisis may require an immediate force projection well before a carrier task force could arrive on station. The inability of even technologically advanced aircraft to effectively support a conflict over long distances was illustrated in the Malvinas/Falklands War.

The Argentines' decision not to establish a forward operating base on the Malvinas was a significant factor in their defeat. Rather than extend the facilities to accommodate their Etendard and A-4 aircraft during the month between their occupation and the arrival of the British, the Argentines decided to launch their aircraft from the mainland and use extra fuel tanks and aerial refueling to reach the islands and the British fleet. This placed their superior aircraft at a severe disadvantage against the inferior British Harriers, designed for a close air support role.

> By the time the Argentine planes had flown with the necessary fuel and added tanks all the way to the Malvinas, there was no way they

> could face the British aircraft on an equal footing; they were simply too over-loaded. Even with drop tanks, the Skyhawks were at their extreme range when flying to the islands from the mainland, which didn't leave any fuel for air combat maneuvering (40:114).

An analysis of this situation led Admiral Stansfield Turner to conclude, "had the islands been 100 miles closer to Argentina, Argentina would very likely have won" (45:50).

The U.S. invasion of Grenada is instructive as well. Though this was a limited operation with little resistance and no significant air-to-air threat, it still required the establishment of a forward operating base in Barbados for effective execution. It can be reasoned a more sustained operation against greater resistance, to include an air-to-air threat, would also require a basing site closer to the area of operation.

It is evident then that force is most effectively projected when secure staging bases are available as near as possible to the target area. Marvin Gordon of George Washington University argues the need for these bases in Latin America by saying, "it should be a geopolitical policy goal of the United States to ensure that these places are made available to the appropriate armed forces on the basis of long-term leases or other appropriate arrangements (17:23). These "arrangements" could include agreements granting access rights during crises or contingencies (19:25). The small number of U.S. military facilities already in the region makes such access all the more important (18:153). Typical of these arrangements are the agreements giving the U.S. access to facilities in Kenya and Somalia to support operations in Southwest Asia. If such access rights were granted it could be argued maintaining a physical presence in Latin America would be unnecessary. Even without such agreements countries would most likely give access to their facilities if a crisis impacted their interests, as was the case with Barbados during the Grenada operation. These arguments have merit and should be considered in any long-range plan. However, they do have pitfalls and, thus, cannot represent a panacea.

In any negotiations for access rights the host country can be expected to restrict the circumstances in which access will be given. The New Zealand refusal to allow nuclear armed or powered U.S. Navy ships into her ports, despite the existence of a mutual defense treaty with the U.S., is indicative of the potential problems. Additionally, other factors, such as fear of reprisals from other nations, may cause a country to conclude it not in its interest to allow U.S. forces access. Thus, access agreements may not be a guarantee of access.

The assumption friendly countries will grant temporary access to their facilities in time of crisis is a precarious one upon which to do military planning. The refusal of Kuwait and other Persian Gulf States to grant landing rights and port access to U.S. aircraft and ships escorting their oil tankers in 1987 illustrates this (1:18-19). Despite a compelling interest in tanker security and the fact Kuwait requested the escort they were still reluctant to grant temporary access to support the operation. The U.S. operation in Grenada offers insight as well. It wasn't until late on the day before the invasion

that Barbados granted permission to use its facilities, resulting in the advance team arriving just three hours prior to the invasion to establish the forward operating base (12:--). The national interests of a country may not be sufficient to cause it to grant temporary U.S. military access to its facilities in a crisis. Even if it does, permission may come on very short notice. To assume access on short notice during a crisis is an assumption, not a fact, and the U.S. should plan accordingly.

The arguments against a physical USAF presence in Latin America include the ability of the USAF to support operations from the Conus and the preference for base access agreements, either actual or assumed. The first argument was shown to be untenable and the second, while having more merit, does have significant shortcomings. The refutation of these arguments pointed to some of the advantages of a physical presence in the region. We now look at some direct arguments for such a presence.

As mentioned earlier, sustained force projection is more effectively accomplished by staging from bases close to the target area. Writing in National Defense, Tony Velocci makes a convincing argument that even present U.S. forces are inadequate to effectively project force into the area. He states, "The U.S. maintains only a token presence in the Caribbean, which means that this country's ability to project military power into the region quickly and decisively is virtually nonexistent" (59:38). This view is supported by Assistant Secretary of Defense Nestor Sanchez who states, "the permanent facilities we do have in Panama, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the southern portion of the U.S. are too far away from the trouble spots, especially in Central America, to be of much tactical use" (54:192). The loss of bases in Panama would further weaken this already thin infrastructure, reducing our force projection capability.

If the bases in Panama are lost, it would be natural to think the void could be filled by naval forces. To assume the slack created by such loss could be taken up by using carrier based airpower, particularly in a wider war, would be fallacious. Dr. Haley of the Center for International Strategic Studies points this out. "Any diversion of carriers and surface combatants from their regular assignments to blockade or combat duty in the Caribbean would reduce the other fleets to token forces unable to carry out their missions" (20:84). Thus, if we are to maintain the lines of communication and be able to effectively project force in the region, the Air Force should be counted on to play a significant, if not dominant, role and therefore must have a presence to support any force projection operations. Allowing the loss of air bases in Panama without compensating measures will degrade an already weak capability.

The remaining positive arguments revolve around essentially political benefits that will accrue from a USAF presence. By maintaining a presence the U.S. sends a strong message to friends and enemies concerning its resolve to defend its interests there. As U.S. forces are withdrawn from Panama, to include the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command, "the decision of where to locate the theater command and its supporting forces . . . will be an important indicator of U.S. commitment to regional security" (32:3). A continued presence also serves to encourage U.S. allies (14:12) and deter

potential aggressors. The deterrent value of U.S. military activity in the region was highlighted recently by the revelations of Sandinista defector Major Roger Miranda. He indicated Nicaraguan support for guerrillas in other countries dropped significantly in response to the U.S. intervention in Grenada (9:--). Overall, then, the presence of U.S. forces in the region has a stabilizing effect.

Air Force assets are particularly suited for roles contributing to regional stability. Given the often poorly developed road and transportation systems, airlift forces, for example, used in civic action missions can create goodwill for the U.S. and the host governments. Their participation in nation building activities helps develop the social, political and economic infrastructure needed for growth and stability. Air Force radar units and surveillance aircraft can aid drug interdiction efforts. Drug traffickers in the region have corrupted officials (11:25) and added to instability throughout the hemisphere (39:9). Using Air Force resources in such ways contributes to regional stability, aids nation building, creates goodwill and provides excellent training while maintaining a presence.

To summarize this section, Dr. Haley convincingly argues that "the unavoidable military reality is that the United States is without adequate military support for its foreign policy objectives in Central America" (20:83). The loss of bases in Panama will exacerbate this problem. An American military presence is needed in the region for the political statement it makes concerning U.S. commitment and resolve. It also is needed to effectively support force projection operations. Since naval forces may not be able to respond quickly enough, or may not be available at all, the air force must be relied on for the dominant role. Air forces need staging bases close to the target area to be effectively used and their presence in the region can promote stability. Therefore, maintaining a physical USAF presence in the region should be a policy goal of the United States.

Chapter Four

OPTIONS FOR A USAF PRESENCE

This chapter will propose a model for maintaining a USAF presence in Latin America. After describing the model, a more detailed explanation and rationale will follow. Parts of the model will have implications for other branches of the U.S. military. These implications will be addressed in more detail only if they affect or serve to justify a USAF presence.

THE MODEL

The first step is to reactivate Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, making it the keystone or hub of USAF and DOD activity in the region. This would be done by moving the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Air Division (USAFSO) and SOUTHCOM there and making U.S. Forces Caribbean a subunified command of SOUTHCOM.

Second, establish a USAF presence in Grenada and San Andres islands. These would be small, primarily Military Airlift Command (MAC), operations providing staging, transient maintenance, and limited aerial port services, while establishing a basing infrastructure capable of rapid build up in a contingency.

Third, exercise the U.S. right to reoccupy/reactivate selected U.S. military facilities throughout the Caribbean. The foundation for this move is the 1941 Base Lease Agreement between the U.S. and Great Britain. Dr Edward Padelford explains this option in the Fall 86 edition of Strategic Review (36:58). It should be noted limited steps have begun to be taken along this line.

Fourth, assign Air Attaches to selected U.S. embassies in the Caribbean who are accredited to several countries. This step is aimed at filling a gap in intelligence gathering capability in the region, highlighted by the intelligence deficiencies in the 1983 Grenada Operation (36:56). This idea is also proposed by Dr Padelford in the article cited above (36:58-59).

Finally, each of the above steps should be supported by an extensive civic action program using Air Force assets. This would soften any negative reaction resulting from the first three steps by creating goodwill. Additionally, it would establish a physical presence, albeit temporary, where bases do not exist, and develop national infrastructures needed to promote stability in the region.

Each segment of this five part model will now be developed.

Reactivate Ramey AFB

As stated earlier, "the decision of where to locate the theater command its supporting forces . . . will be an important indicator of U.S. commitment to regional security" (32:3). Reopening Ramey would keep SOUTHCOM and its supporting forces in Latin America and thereby serve as an indicator of strong U.S. commitment. The value of keeping the forces in Latin America is evidenced by the interest some have expressed in developing Honduras as a replacement for U.S. facilities in Panama. Because of this interest, it must be explained why this author did not choose Honduras as a suitable location.

There appears to be no clear indication the Hondurans are willing to accept a large, permanent U.S. military presence in their country. This is evidenced by the debate between Congressmen Bill Alexander and W. G. Hefner and Assistant Secretary of Defense Nestor Sanchez during hearings on Military Construction Appropriations for 1987 (57:283-288). Former SOUTHCOM commander General Paul Gorman testified before Congress, "We have not proposed a permanent U.S. military installation in Honduras . . . The Hondurans would not have one" (55:59). The reluctance, perceived or real, of the Hondurans to accept a permanent U.S. military presence arises from several factors.

Like other Latin American countries Honduras is concerned about its image as an independent sovereign nation free from undue U.S. influence. Their acceptance of a large-scale temporary U.S. presence, as well as that of U.S. clients, thas already affected their prestige in the region, making them sensitive to any future U.S. overtures.

> The political leadership did not relish Latin American opinion to perceive Honduran sovereignty as being subverted by the Contras' virtual immunity and the ever-growing U.S. military presence . . . Honduras is generally viewed as a U.S. surrogate . . . (44:91)

These feelings were expressed in a Honduran newspaper editorial stating, "We have lost everything, including our honor" (25:10). Efforts to restore their image have included telling "the U.S. to ease off on the major exercises" (28:36) and to restrict Contra training (28:36).

The history of regional conflict represents another stumbling block to a permanent presence both for the Hondurans and the U.S. A significant activity of U.S. forces in the region involves training indigenous forces. Yet, the Hondurans stopped U.S. training of Salvadoran troops (56:276), their historic rival, in Honduras and went so far as to close the U.S. facility dedicated to that purpose (28:36). This action, coupled with the restrictions attempted on exercises and Contra training cited before, significantly reduces the flexibility of U.S. forces in achieving their goals.

Finally, committing the U.S. to a large permanent presence in Honduras would hold us hostage to ever-increasing demands. In a recent four-year period

U.S. annual economic assistance to Honduras grew from $4 million to $77 million (56:277). The Hondurans wanted still more in exchange for permission to operate a regional training center there. Additionally, they wanted a security treaty that would have potentially allied the U.S. with them against El Salvador and increased military aid in exchange for another facility (58:3). At what point does this stop? Once permanent facilities were established, it may become easier to acquiesce to ever greater demands with each renegotiation of expired basing agreements than to relocate. It would appear wiser to go where periodic renegotiation and increasing demands won't be a factor. Ramey would be such a place.

Ramey belongs to the U.S. and is in U.S. territory. Thus, the sensitivity to sovereignty issues need not be as great. This in turn allows the U.S. the flexibility to do what it feels necessary there without the spectre of host nation restrictions or ever increasing demands. This is accomplished with the added benefit of remaining in Latin America.

While sovereignty would not be an issue, local concerns would remain due to the Commonwealth status of Puerto Rico and the desire of some for complete independence. The more extreme elements in the independence movement have committed violent acts against U.S. military resources there in the past. Therefore, security of Air Force assets would be of concern.

This should not be, however, an overriding factor preventing us from reactivating the base. The U.S. Navy continues to maintain a considerable presence in Puerto Rico, despite the potential terrorist threat. In fact, as Ramey was closing, the Navy sought to assume control and use of selected facilities at Ramey (24:--) (13:--). The message in this is simply that the threat is not insurmountable and can be dealt with using appropriate security measures.

It is also reasonable to assume the economic benefits accruing to the local population from a renewed presence at Ramey would serve to discourage those opposed to it. A detailed economic analysis is beyond the scope of this work. However, it is obvious considerable spending would occur that would benefit the local economy. An argument could be made for the desirability of spending those monies there in the U.S. economy, rather than in another country.

In making Ramey the hub of USAF activity in Latin America, it was recommended SOUTHCOM and USAFSO be moved there and that USFORCARIB be incorporated into SOUTHCOM. The idea of a unified operating command for this region was suggested by Marvin Gordon in Military Review (17:20) and has historical precedent. In 1946 the Caribbean Air Command was activated

> to integrate into a single air command all Army Air Force units presently assigned or to be assigned . . . to insure their most effective coordinated employment . . . Tactical employment of air and ground units will be . . . by the Commanding General, Caribbean Defense Command (22:2).

This command included all military installations in the Caribbean and Central America (22:3). Later, it included all USAF missions and facilities in South America as well (6:--). Consolidating all DOD activity in the region under a single unified command at Ramey would allow better coordination and more efficient employment of forces, and avoid having a unified command headquartered in another command's theater.

Ramey is an excellent platform from which the Air Force can perform its maritime operations mission. The importance of the Caribbean sea lines of communication (SLOC) has already been shown. USAF involvement in their protection is vital because it can complement naval assets and free the fleet to conduct offensive operations.

Writing in the Naval War College Review, Captain S. D. Landersman concludes, "The U.S. Navy has not given adequate attention to the protection of shipping during national emergencies" (30:33). Some feel this is because the Navy eschews defensive missions, preferring offensive strategies (62:35).

> Assigning U.S. Navy combatants to protect these SLOCs would be costly in terms of time and assets. Overall, assigning Navy ships to this defensive mission would detract from the North Atlantic forward offensive strategy (8:48).

Another writer, in a U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings article concludes:

> This indicates that the Navy is still structured to fight the battles of yesteryear--carrier air strikes against land targets and massive over-the-beach-type amphibious assaults against heavily defended beaches--rather than to maintain our SLOCs in accordance with current national strategy (4:94).

The LANTCOM Commander will have his hands full in a Warsaw Pact-NATO confrontation conducting offensive operations and protecting North Atlantic shipping. "Any diversion of carriers and surface combatants from their regular assignments to blockade or combat duty in the Caribbean would reduce the other fleets to token forces unable to carry out their missions" (20:84). USAF aircraft operating from Ramey can relieve those ships from that mission in the Caribbean and South Atlantic, freeing the fleet to pursue its offensive strategy.

The primary aircraft to perform this mission currently would be B-52's carrying Harpoon antiship missiles, working in tandem with surveillance aircraft. As more conventional roles are sought for B-52's retiring from the nuclear force, another squadron should be equipped with Harpoons and based at Ramey. In addition to protecting Caribbean SLOCs they could control the South Atlantic. One scenario envisions a twenty-nine ship Soviet fleet entering the South Atlantic around South Africa and steaming north to attack the U.S. Atlantic Fleet from the rear (8:49). A squadron of twelve B-52's from Ramey could inundate the Soviet force with 144 Harpoons. An antisubmarine capability can be provided by P-3 aircraft operated by the Navy or Air Force. (Since maritime operations are now a major Air Force mission consideration should be given to acquiring such aircraft for Air Force use.)

Reactivating Ramey AFB and making it the center of DOD activity in Latin America would have many advantages. Keeping the theater command in Latin America would signal continued strong U.S. commitment to regional security. It would allow U.S. forces the flexibility to perform their missions without undue restrictions from a host nation, or appearing to infringe upon the nation's sovereignty. Economic benefits would accrue to the local U.S. economy, rather than to that of another country. Additionally, the existence of base facilities would lessen construction and upgrade costs. Though not addressed earlier, it should be noted excellent training areas exist for all services on Puerto Rico and nearby Vieques Island. Finally, USAF aircraft at Ramey can perform a vital role in defending the Caribbean SLOCs and South Atlantic, thereby freeing the fleet to conduct offensive operations. Therefore, reactivation of Ramey should be the first step in preparing for a USAF presence in Latin America in the year 2000.

Grenada and San Andres Islands

While Ramey would afford many advantages, it alone would be inadequate to meet all requirements and would have limited tactical use (54:192) in operations on the South and Central American mainlands. Therefore, forward operating locations should be established on Grenada and San Andres islands. Ideally, these would be operated by MAC and provide aerial port and staging facilities from which to support airlift operations into Central and South America in much the way Howard AFB does now. A limited transient maintenance capability should also be established to service airlift, surveillance and fighter aircraft deploying to or through the region. Additionally, facilities would be constructed to provide an infrastructure for rapid build up in a contingency. Grenada and San Andres were selected for specific reasons.

Grenada. All of the things making Grenada a threat to U.S. security interests in the region would also make it an asset. Prior to the U.S. military intervention there in 1983, the big concern there was the 9800-foot-long runway that had a "strategic significance as a possible staging base for MiG aircraft since it is located near an important oil tanker route, the Trinidad oil fields, the Netherlands Antilles refineries, and major routes to the Panama Canal" (18:163). Just as that facility would pose a threat in hostile hands, it would also be an asset in U.S. hands. Congressman Eldon Rudd raised the question of a U.S. military presence there during Congressional hearings in 1985 (56:285-286). Grenada should be selected as a site for a USAF presence for several reasons.

First, is its proximity to South America. This makes it an excellent staging point for aircraft operating onto the continent, particularly the northern portion, and over the South Atlantic. Of special importance also is the closeness to oil fields and refineries that would need defending during hostilities. This region is a major source and conduit of petroleum imported to the U.S.

Secondly, Grenada is near major shipping routes. "The airfields on Grenada could seriously compromise the eastern defences of the Panama Canal,

and an enemy installed on the island would threaten U.S. seaborne traffic in the area" (38:33). The St. Lucia passage is of special significance to oil shipments.

> If very large crude carriers (or ultra large crude carriers) remain in use during hostilities, passages will be restricted mainly to the Galleons, St. Lucia and Providence thruways. This would attract enemy vessels into the area to interdict such traffic" (17:22).

USAF aircraft on Grenada could provide air cover necessary to protect these routes.

Third, the 9800-foot-long runway is large enough to handle every aircraft in the USAF inventory. Therefore, the cost to upgrade the facility would be greatly reduced. This would also allow maximum flexibility for employing air power. Not only could it accommodate the largest airlift aircraft, it could also serve as a forward deployment site for bombers involved in maritime operations or high altitude reconnaissance aircraft, such as the U-2 and SR-71.

Finally, in a region where countries are trying to exert their independence from U.S. influence, Grenada would be most likely to accept a USAF presence. The U.S. military intervention in 1983 was favorably received by the populace. "This is not surprising given the role of the US in Grenadian eyes: it rescued them from a repressive military regime . . ." (43:177). Surprisingly, this created a strong psychological dependence on the United States, "Expressed as a strong preference for imported values and a mendicant attitude . . ." (43:178).

This is exacerbated by their weak economy, reflected in a growing trade deficit (49:2). In an effort to maintain stability on the island "an annual U.S. assistance package will be necessary indefinitely" (10:170). If such assistance is to be the case, then it should not be too much to expect something tangible in return. A USAF presence on Grenada would provide such a return as well as direct economic benefits.

The strategic location of Grenada, its excellent runway, and the attitude favorable to U.S. interests make it a suitable and likely place for a USAF presence. This should be pursued.

San Andres Island. Professor Jack Child of The American University recommends San Andres Island as a potential U.S. military base (18:183). A base there would be of the same type and have the same functions as one on Grenada. Whereas Grenada would focus on supporting operations in the Eastern Caribbean and South America, San Andres would aim to support them in Central America and northwest South America (Colombia, Peru, Ecuador).

Much of what has been said for Grenada can be said of San Andres. It has an excellent airport with a 7900-feet-long paved runway. It is strategically located approximately 100 miles off the Nicaraguan coast, providing a suitable staging base for airlift, surveillance and other aircraft in the western Caribbean. It is also within easy reach of the Panama Canal, making air assets readily available for its defense, to include the Pacific approaches. There

are reasons Colombia, which administers the island, may accept a USAF presence there.

The most significant objection to accepting a USAF presence would involve sensitivity to the sovereignty concerns of Colombia. Like Honduras, Colombia would not relish the image of being a U.S. surrogate. There are ameliorating factors which would make a presence acceptable and things the U.S. could do to assuage such concerns.

The first factor is San Andres' separation from the Colombian mainland. Lying approximately 500 miles northwest of Colombia it is officially classified as a border area (3:384). The remoteness would lessen the impact of any views that U.S. forces were making an incursion into the Colombian homeland, allowing almost an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" attitude. This would also have security benefits since the forces would not be exposed to the guerrilla activity prevalent in the mainland. The separation factor gives rise to the second.

San Andres is culturally and ethnically distinct from Colombia. Colombia has a strong Spanish, Roman Catholic history and tradition, often being described as "more Catholic than the Pope" (10:68). San Andres, on the other hand, is populated by protestant, English-speaking blacks who descended from African slaves brought by British settlers and from Jamaican immigrants. They have resisted assimilation into Colombian society "and regard themselves as a group distinct from mainland residents" (3:100). This lack of mutual identification may make a presence more palatable, since mainlanders would be less concerned about a distant minority group. The linguistic and religious similarity would make it easier for U.S. personnel to reach out to the San Andreans and establish a positive relationship. Cultural relationships also play a part in the final factor.

The new president of Colombia, Virgilio Barco, worked and was educated in the United States, graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has an American wife (10:68). "Barco's professional and personal ties to the US . . . were expected to influence foreign policy, easing Colombia away from the Third World, non-aligned position taken by the Betancur government" (29:63). "President Barco is less critical of the U.S. and its policies than was his predecessor" (10:69). Thus, the U.S. may now be presented with a leader amenable to a USAF presence on San Andres if certain things are done. The U.S. must act quickly on this to begin doing those things early enough in Barco's four-year term, expiring in 1990, so tangible benefits are produced for Colombia.

The first thing to do would be to increase military and developmental aid. Barco won a landslide victory promising to deal firmly with the guerrillas (10:68) and to emphasize programs attacking the causes of insurgency by directing government efforts at creating the necessary infrastructure of governmental services to previously neglected areas (48:7). "Housing, health, roads and water services were high on his list . . ." (29:68). The U.S. can provide the funds, skills and resources to make Barco a success in a joint effort.

Second, as in Grenada, direct economic benefits would accrue to the people of San Andres. The island is mostly undeveloped with coconuts being the major income producer along with a small tourist industry (3:360).

Third, to avoid potential embarrassment to Colombia for appearing to renege on its commitment to the Contadora Plan, the U.S. should agree not to use San Andres in any way to support the Contras.

Finally, the United States could begin engineering studies for the construction of a sea level canal across northwest Colombia. Such a canal would begin from the Gulf of Uraba and follow the Atrato River and its tributaries as far as possible to the west before the final excavation was made to the Pacific. (This idea was suggested to the author in a personal discussion by a senior Latin American military officer who wished to remain anonymous.)

This idea would have several benefits. Such a canal would accommodate the largest ships. The Panama Canal "is too small for much of today's seaborne commerce and for larger fighting ships, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carriers" (38:33). It would connect the Pacific and Caribbean coasts of Colombia, providing a commercial waterway and opening up previously undeveloped areas. Next, making Colombia an important conduit of international commerce would raise its prestige in the region and eliminate concerns over future instability in Panama and access to its canal. Finally, this action would send the message to Panama that it can be replaced and, thus, put the U.S. in a stronger bargaining position with respect to base access in Panama and other matters.

A USAF presence on San Andres Island would have significant benefit for the U.S. by enabling it to more effectively support military and assistance operations in the region. Factors exist now which make such a presence possible. There are mutually beneficial things the U.S. can do for Colombia in exchange for allowing this presence. By acting quickly, there will be time for beneficial things to happen in Colombia which will bolster Barco's position, showing this closer relationship with the U.S. to be in Colombia's interest. The U.S. is, therefore, encouraged to pursue a USAF presence on San Andres without delay.

A small, permanent USAF presence on Grenada and San Andres would complement U.S. military activities at Ramey and provide staging bases within easy reach of the Central and South American mainland. A recommended organizational structure would be to make them air base squadrons under an air base wing or composite wing at Ramey. Whatever the structure may be, the advantages of having such locations make them desirable and, in the face of loss of Panamanian bases, essential.

Reactivate Caribbean Facilities

The infrastructure for this option lies in the base lease agreement of 1941 between the U.S. and Great Britain. This agreement gave the U.S. permission to establish air and naval bases in British possessions throughout

the Caribbean Basin and remains in effect through 2040 (36:58). While most of these facilities have been closed, the U.S. maintains the right to reoccupy and reactivate them. Though many of the islands are now independent countries this right was specifically retained in sales contracts between the U.S. and the local governments. Typical of this arrangement is the contract for the sale of Coolidge AFB in Antigua.

> It is further understood and agreed that any 'in place' use of improvements will in no way abrogate the rights of the United States acquired under the 99 Year Base Lease Agreement . . . concerning the opening of certain Military Air Bases in the Caribbean Area and Bermuda . . .
>
> It is further understood and agreed that in the event it becomes necessary due to a National Emergency or for any other reason for the [U.S.] Government to reoccupy any part or all of the 99 year lease areas in Antigua, that the [U.S.] Government will have the privilege to reacquire the buildings and facilities . . . (46:3-4)

Anticipating this possibility a very detailed inspection and inventory was conducted, to include extensive photographs of the runways and facilities. This was done because the "data might prove an invaluable aid in the event of a reactivation of Coolidge Air Force Base by the United States Air Force" (7:2).

In most cases these air bases were converted to civil aviation use by the local governments. It would, therefore, be inappropriate for the U.S. to put an island nation's international airport out of business. However, small units, organized as detachments of the wing at Ramey, with specialized tasks could be placed at selected locations.

The first such unit that comes to mind would be a radar unit using perhaps the USAF TPS-70 mobile radar. This has particular significance with regard to drug interdiction efforts. A National Security Decision Directive signed by President Reagan in April, 1986, placed regional drug trafficking in the category of a threat to U.S. national security and authorized an expanded role for military forces in combating it (5:--). Currently, one can fly from South America to Florida and not be on radar after getting 40 miles off the coast and until passing Cuba (53:977). Placing radar units on selected islands as part of the Caribbean Basin Radar Network (57:356) would provide unbroken radar surveillance (36:60).

Other units collocated with the radar might include weather observers, a small security force, a nurse or doctor and medical technician, a one or two helicopter rescue unit with pararescuemen, and selected support personnel. The medical people could conduct limited medical civic action programs while the helicopters provided a rescue and medical evacuation service to neighboring islands with no airport facilities. These activities would create significant goodwill in the region toward the United States. Each location could be manned with less than 100 people, easily supported on the local economy.

Surveillance of Cuba and increased Soviet naval activity in the area would also be enhanced using these facilities. This is especially important as the

U.S. contemplates the loss of its naval base at Guantanamo (56:286). In this regard, Jamaica, the site of Vernan AFB in the 1940's (2:--), might be considered to counter the loss of Guantanamo. It straddles the southern approach to the Mona Passage and was considered a back up to Guantanamo when bases were first established there (60:1). There is a good relationship between the U.S. and Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga and considerable goodwill in Jamaica toward the U.S., expressed in the rise of the Jamaica-America Party which advocates Jamaica becoming part of the U.S. (26:182).

Since other countries may not be as receptive to the U.S. due to local political sensitivities, there is another option. Some islands have remained dependencies or colonies of Great Britain. In those cases, the U.S. could deal directly with Britain to establish a presence. The Cayman Islands have been recommended by some as a potential site for this approach (18:183).

The cost of such a strategy would be small compared to other options, yet still offer significant incentive to local economies. Under the 99 year agreement, the U.S. maintained an air force base on Grand Turk as late as 1982 for an annual rent of only $1 million (36:58). The cost of reopening this facility has been estimated as low as $5 million (36:36), considerably less than the cost of an aircraft carrier or E-3A AWACS aircraft.

While no formal agreements for bases exist with other European allies they should be considered. Both the French and Dutch have influence and involvement in the region. Of special significance is the French presence, in particular the space launch facility in French Guyana on the north coast of South America. It is a prime launch site for the European Space Agency (ESA).

The U.S. has only two major space launch facilities and both are vulnerable. They are in coastal areas easily accessible to saboteurs and are susceptible to natural disasters (earthquakes in California and hurricanes in Florida). Having access to an alternate facility would lessen these risks and enhance U.S. space operations. A reciprocal use agreement whereby the U.S. can use the ESA facility in exchange for ESA using a U.S. site more suitable to polar orbits should be considered. With such an agreement the option to use the facilities would be exercised periodically to develop procedures and proficiency. While this would not contribute directly to U.S. security interests in Latin America, it would enhance our overall military capability.

Whichever locations are eventually chosen would increase our surveillance capability, foster goodwill toward the U.S. and provide limited forward staging capabilities for contingencies at limited cost. The U.S. should take advantage of the opportunity the Base Lease Agreement affords and negotiate reactivation of selected facilities, or the establishment of new ones where previous ones did not exist.

> Certainly the memories of the Grenada experience--and a stronger consciousness among the small states of a continued threat to their common security--provide a favorable climate for the reknitting of such modest, but important, military ties (36:58).

Air Attaches

The U.S. maintains Defense Attache offices in selected Caribbean Basin countries. The attache in Barbados also serves six other nations. Despite this presence, "There is not a single Air Force officer or Air Attache in the entire Caribbean" (36:59). This lack creates deficiencies in intelligence available to USAF planners.

Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada provided an example of this deficiency. A consideration in selecting a forward operating base was the amount of aviation fuel available at the location. Yet, there was no one who could tell the airlift commander that information (37:--). Consequently, the advance party arrived in Barbados three hours prior to the invasion without a clear picture of the fuel available to support the initial operations. This problem could have been eliminated by an Air Attache--a person who thinks and talks "Air Force" and is tasked to collect information that could bear on USAF air operations in the region. Such a person would also signal continued U.S. interest in regional security and help develop stronger military-to-military relationships, thereby increasing U.S. influence.

Manning these positions would require limited resources. One or two officers accredited to several nations each would suffice. Since only Haiti and the Dominican Republic have sizable air forces, assigning rated officers, an already dwindling asset, would not be necessary. Someone from a security assistance background may be more appropriate. It has been suggested members of the Reserve Defense Attache Program with a variety of skills could be used (36:59). The use of such reservists in the smaller countries would be very cost effective.

Air Attaches, while not providing bases, would provide a presence. They would demonstrate U.S. interest in the region, strengthen military-to-military ties, and provide adequate intelligence for USAF planners in contingencies. An expanded Air Attache presence in the Caribbean Basin is, therefore, encouraged and should be pursued.

Air Force Civic Action Programs

Civic Action (CA) programs have for the most part been considered an Army endeavor. No counterpart to the Army civic action units exists in the Air Force. The ultimate mission of the Air Force is to defend the security interests of the United States. While CA is not a "fly and fight" activity, it can create conditions that will promote stability and lessen the appeal of Marxist insurgents in the region. The Air Force can safeguard U.S. security interests by helping reduce that appeal.

> If the socio-economic conditions in a particular country improve, then insurgent groups will find it extremely difficult to win the hearts and minds of the people. Civic action programs, designed to support national development, aid in the improvement of the people's living conditions, making them more supportive and loyal to their governments (27:6).

If the USAF can protect U.S. security interests by conducting such programs, then it must get involved in them.

There is a legislative mandate for this involvement contained in the 1961 Foreign Service Act, as amended, Section 502. It states, "Defense articles and services to any country should be furnished . . . to construct public works and engage in other activities helpful to the economic and social development of friendly countries" (41:10). The USAF has resources ideally suited to support CA programs in the lesser developed Latin American countries.

Tactical airlift aircraft can be used to move construction equipment, materials and people into areas to build roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure. USAF engineers on Prime BEEF and Red Horse teams can build schools, clinics and other facilities to improve the well-being of the people. Medical personnel can conduct medical civic action programs (Med CAP) along the lines of Army Med CAP missions. Rescue helicopters can perform medical evacuation flights from isolated areas near U.S. bases. Other opportunities will no doubt present themselves.

There are several advantages in these programs for the U.S. First, is the stability they foster by lessening the appeal of Marxist insurgents or the Cubans and Soviets. Second, it creates a favorable image for the U.S., increasing our influence, by having a positive presence. Third, it can lessen resistance to a USAF presence in a country. This is of special importance if other suggestions in this work are adopted. Fourth, it provides excellent training and increased morale by having USAF personnel involved in tangible, worthwhile activities under real, often austere, conditions. Finally, the U.S. would not have to bear the costs of these programs alone. Funds can be provided by the host nation or various international aid and development organizations.

Because of the need for these programs and the many advantages, the following recommendations are made. Air Force civic action offices should be established within USAFSO and USFORCARIB to plan, coordinate and oversee CA activities. If the suggestion to incorporate USFORCARIB into SOUTHCOM is adopted, its CA office can be eliminated. These offices should work closely with countries in the region to assess their needs. Second, each USAF base should be tasked to develop a local CA program designed to create and improve local acceptance of the base presence. The scope of such programs would remain commensurate with local base resources.

SUMMARY

Latin America is strategically important to the United States as a source and conduit of raw materials and in terms of the global geopolitical balance. The U.S. cannot ignore Latin American issues and concerns. Many observers of Latin America "are convinced that continuing to ignore Latin America or treating it as if it were of only peripheral importance is precisely what helps give rise to revolutions and anti-Americanism in Latin America . . ." (61:34). Our adversaries are aware of this and will increasingly attempt to influence the region, drawing it away from U.S. influence.

The days of taking for granted a secure backyard are past. The loss of U.S. bases in Panama, coupled with Panamanian strongman Noriega's flirtation with Cuba and the Soviets, portends increased challenges to U.S. security interest and threats to our friends.

It is, therefore, in the interest of U.S. security to maintain a USAF presence in the region. This will signal U.S. resolve to defend her interests and those of her friends. The model for a USAF presence presented herein will do this. It is hoped all or part of it will be adopted by U.S. policy makers.

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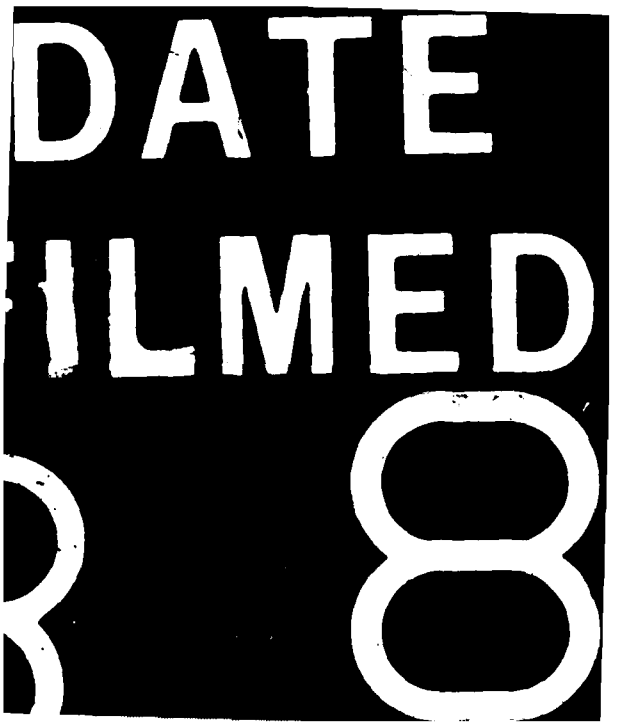
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